

**Independent Aging Agenda Event Report
From**

So We Never Have to Stop Learning
An Independent Aging Agenda Event:

Laurel Gardens of Woodbridge
Tuesday, June 21, 2005

Panelists:

Amey Marrella; first Selectmen of Woodbridge, Connecticut.

Molla Rosen; Resident at Laurel Gardens of Woodbridge

Yvonne Shia Klanko; Director of Adult Education, Amity Regional High School,

Rhea Hirshman; Freelance Writer, Adjunct Professor, University of CT at Stamford

Trish O'Leary; President of the Institute for Learning in Retirement, Albertus Magnus

Dr. Elvia Paz- PhD; Arts & Tai Chi Instructor at Laurel Gardens of Woodbridge

This event was a panel discussion with panelists and attendees holding a free-flowing conversation and then developing policy recommendations on how to assure that baby-boomers will have continued access to learning opportunities as they age.

Summary of discussion comments by panelists and attendees:

- Provide more transportation for seniors
- Change the name "Senior Center"
- Seniors to provide knowledge to youth & youth to provide knowledge to seniors
- Seniors not to be so isolated, how can we get them to be more active and social
- Look at how we can get seniors to remain independent for as long as possible
- Government needs to look at opportunity for seniors to serve and fill in opportunities
- Seniors Centers need to offer more to the community
- No matter what age you are, keep your eyes open for things to do- stay active
- What else can be done to keep opportunities open for seniors?

- Seniors need to learn how to take active leadership
- Once done with an accomplishment, find something else to do, and ask someone to assist
- “Never Stop Learning” is always a continued effort
- Senior centers provide computer classes, art classes, dance classes, art shows to remain active for the learning process
- Public broadcasting not to be cut
- Provide medical support to teach benefits of new drugs
- Educate the elderly about retirement and finances included
- Use seniors life education
- Washington to set priority to learn languages

Specific recommendation on key policy areas:

Transportation is the most important issue that baby-boomers will face in accessing educational opportunities as they age. Federal policy needs to examine how to ensure that affordable transportation is available to aging baby-boomers, regardless of physical condition and income level. This issue is particularly compelling given the lack of organized mass transit around the country.

Senior centers are key providers of educational opportunities and should be supported into the future, not only to ensure that their current services remain uncompromised, but also to make sure that new needed services, such as language classes and education on

financial and medical issues, are provided. It may be necessary to change the name “senior center” to another name that reflects that these centers are integral parts of society.

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